

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 9, 2003. Claims 1 to 20 remain in the application, with Claims 1 to 3, 6 to 8, 11 to 13 and 16 to 18 having been amended. Claims 1, 6, 11 and 16 are the independent claims herein. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

The title was objected to. A new title has been provided for as set forth above. Withdrawal of the objection to the title is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,320,667 (Mitsubishi). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention concerns searching for a printer connected to a network using intermediate data. According to the invention, when, for example, a user selects an option to perform a print operation, intermediate data is generated based on a drawing function formed by a graphic engine of an operating system on the basis of a draw command from an application. For instance, the intermediate data may be spooled data that is held in the spooler rather than being spooled and immediately transferred to a print engine for printout. Print conditions are obtained from the generated intermediate data and the print conditions are transmitted as a printer search condition to a search server to search for printers that meet the print conditions. A printer to which the intermediate data should be output is then selected based on device designation information obtained from the search server. For instance, printers which meet the print conditions that are found by the search server are displayed on a display so that a user can select a printer to perform the printing operation. Once a printer has been selected, the intermediate data is output to a graphic engine of an operating system so as to transfer the drawing function to a printer

driver corresponding to the selected printer. As a result, the search for printers that meet the search conditions is performed seamless to the user based on the intermediate data so that the user can more easily select a printer to output the data to.

Referring specifically to the claims, amended independent Claim 1 is an information processing apparatus which is connected to a plurality of printers through a network, which designates a specific printer from among the plurality of printers, and which transmits print data to the designated printer, comprising intermediate data generating means for receiving a drawing function formed by a graphic engine of an operating system on the basis of a draw command from an application and generating intermediate data on the basis of the drawing function, print condition obtaining means for obtaining print conditions to print a print job of the intermediate data generated by the intermediate data generating means, search condition transmitting means for transmitting the print conditions obtained by the print condition obtaining means as printer search condition to a search server, selecting means for selecting a printer to which the intermediate data should be output on the basis of device designation information obtained from the search server in accordance with the printer search conditions, and intermediate data output means for outputting the intermediate data to the graphic engine of the operating system so as to transfer the drawing function to a printer driver corresponding to the printer selected by the selecting means.

Amended independent Claims 6, 11 and 16 are method, computer storage medium and computer program claims, respectively, that substantially correspond to Claim 1.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 1, 6, 11 and 16. In particular, the applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the

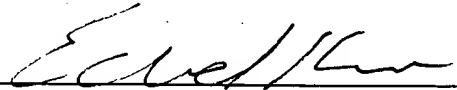
feature of transmitting print conditions obtained from generated intermediate data as printer search condition to a search server, and selecting a printer to which the intermediate data should be output on the basis of device designation information obtained from the search server in accordance with the printer search conditions.

Mitsubishi merely discloses a host computer 200 in which a printer driver 203 receives output control information from an application software 201 via a GDI 202. PDL (page description language) codes are generated by the printer driver from the output control information, and an adaptive printing processor 206 converts the PDL codes generated by the printer driver 203 into optimum PDL codes taking into consideration device information from a printer 100, such as sheet-feed direction. Thus, the PDL codes are merely temporarily stored to be reprocessed to become more optimally suited for the designated printer. While the temporarily stored PDL codes may be seen to correspond to intermediate data, the stored codes are not used to search for a printer and search conditions are not obtained from the temporarily stored PDL codes. Rather, the printer is designated ahead of time and there is no need to search for, or to select a printer from among a plurality of printers. Thus, Mitsubishi is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of transmitting print conditions obtained from generated intermediate data as printer search condition to a search server, and selecting a printer to which the intermediate data should be output on the basis of device designation information obtained from the search server in accordance with the printer search conditions.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, independent Claims 1, 6, 11 and 16, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are believed to be allowable over the applied art. Accordingly, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa,
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our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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